

## THE GULL



Golden Gate Audubon Society

Berkeley, California

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## MARINE ANIMALS

Humpback Whales, harp seals, polar bears and gray whales will be the stars of the February program of the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Photographer **Steven Morello** will talk about the biology, behavior and conservation of these and other marine mammals, gained from fifteen years of first hand experience working with these species.

The program will begin at **7:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 13, 1992** at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley. The program promises to present both an in-depth and current view, as Morello will speak after having spent the month of January in Baja California studying gray whales.

Morello is an accomplished wildlife cinematographer and photographer whose professional philosophy is promoting awareness of the natural environment through education and photography. His photo credits include National Geographic Society Books, and *The New York Times*. He produced the documentary, *Follow the Whale* for cable television, and filmed a NOVA series on migrating animals for Peace River Films. Morello has also had extensive field experience as an observer for Manomet Bird Observatory, as an instructor for National Audubon Society field camps, and as a professional naturalist for many research stations and conservation groups.

The program is open to the public, free as always, and refreshments will be served. Call the GGAS office at (510) 843-2222 for more information about the program or information about other Society activities.

— JOELLE BUFFA

## POPULATION MATTERS

A recent publication of National Audubon, *Why Population Matters (A Handbook for the Environmental Activist)* begins:

"What is one of the single largest factors contributing to the degradation of the earth's environment, the alteration of its climate, and the loss of many plant and animal species? As the cartoon character Pogo observed, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

"Our planet, Earth, is the only one we currently know of with environmental conditions capable of supporting life forms like our own. Yet the dramatic and unprecedented reproductive success of our own species is now a major contributor toward worrisome and perhaps irreversible changes in that environment. *Homo sapiens*, long thought to be the most intelligent life form on Earth, is doing what few wild animals ever do; fouling its own nest."

## FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

**Sunday, Feb. 9**—Lake Merritt, Oakland. Leader: Joan Zawaski

**Wednesday, Feb. 12**—Mini-trip to Coyote Hills Regional Park.

For details on the above, see *The GULL* for January.

**Saturday, Feb. 15**—Lake Merced, San Francisco. Meet at 9 a.m. at the south end of Sunset Blvd. in the Lake Merced Circle. (Muni Bus service available.) This is a good time to see wintering grebes and ducks. Lunch is optional for this half day trip. Leader: Naomi Sveningsen (415-584-6233).

**Sunday, March 8**, Pelagic Trip: Monterey Bay. See page 25 for details.

**Wednesday, March 11**—Mini-trip to Mitchell Canyon. We will meet at 9:30 a.m. Take Hwy 24 through the Caldecott Tunnel. At Walnut Creek take Ygnacio Valley Rd. exit. Go approximately 8 miles, then turn right on to Clayton Rd. Go one mile and make a right onto Mitchell Canyon Rd. and proceed to the parking lot at the end of the road. This is a delightful area with easy streamside walking and many songbirds. Wear shoes suitable for walking in mud, and bring your lunch. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (351-9301) and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

### Plan Ahead:

**Saturday, March 14**—San Francisco Bird Blitz. Leader: Alan Hopkins (664-0983).

**Sunday, March 15**—Tennessee Cove. Leader: Betty Short.

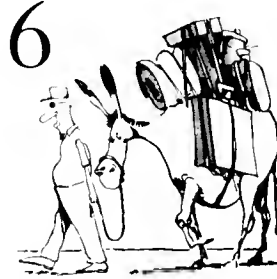
See the next issue of *The GULL* for details.

**Carpooling** arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓).

**Problems:** If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (524-2399).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

## AUDUBON'S TEN TOP TIPS FOR SAVING THE PLANET



**IMPROVE YOUR TRAVEL HABITS**  
— Use public transportation, walk, or bike as feasible. Organize carpools for travelling to work, shopping, and transporting the kids.

## MONTHLY PROGRAMS

March's program was scheduled for the museum in San Francisco; renovations in progress make the space unavailable. So on **Thursday, March 12** we will meet at Berkeley's Northbrae Community Church, instead. A change of program will be announced in *The GULL* for March. John Dillon's presentation will be scheduled for a later date.

"Effects of Forest Fragmentation on Tropical and Eastern Breeding Birds"

**Kathryn Sieving**  
Berkeley, April 9

"California Least Tern Natural History and Current Status"

**Leora Feeny**  
Berkeley, May 14

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## DECEMBER OBSERVATIONS

For a while there it looked as though the drought were more than ever upon us, but late December brought wind and rain, a welcome but a decidedly mixed blessing when trying to do a Christmas Bird Count. At least this year birds weren't dropping at one's feet, victims of intense cold and starvation. The initial impression on most counts was of lower numbers, which might be attributed to the drought or the cold-snap or both. Later in the count period, when the rainy weather intervened, species that had previously been found in very small numbers (just a few individuals) tended to get missed altogether, so the species total fell on a number of counts.

On the pelagic front, the waters are dicier than ever this time of year, so those intrepid souls who set out on a long trip on the 14th earned their good birds: one Black-footed and **fifty-nine Laysan Albatross**; three **Mottled Petrels**; four Flesh-footed Shearwaters and a **Parakeet Auklet**, only the 3rd record since 1974 in California waters (SFB, AWa). On-shore scoping and Christmas Count boats produced a few other interesting sightings: a Flesh-footed and a Short-tailed Shearwater, plus a Tufted Puffin off Santa Cruz on the 14th (fide BBrr, LLu); Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels (fide LLu, JM, BS); a single Black-legged Kittiwake and three Ancient Murrelets off Bodega on the 14th (JEP); eight Marbled Murrelets off Pescadero on the 4th (AWa) and Ancient Murrelets from Pt. Reyes on the 14th (fide DWm). All in all, the sea watching appeared somewhat slower than normal this December. Kittiwakes were few and far between; the Pt. Reyes count missed Marbled Murrelet for the first time in years. Finally a series of storms with gusty SW winds

brought Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels and Red Phalaropes along the weekend after Christmas. The phalaropes were a bit of a surprise on the Southern Marin Count, popping up inside the Bay and in a reservoir high on the slopes of Mt. Tam as well as in the more customary seaside haunts (fide DSi). Another eight were reported from Pigeon Point (BS fide RSTh).

A **Yellow-billed Loon** at Whiskeytown Reservoir at the end of the month (BY) brought back memories of last March's Laysan Albatross there and a recurring feeling that the mythic '68 Chevy station-wagon has been doing yeoman shuttle service again. Ocean birds do show up in strange places (a Great Frigatebird in Oklahoma is one of my favorites), but we haven't had any hurricanes lately and Whiskeytown takes a bit of getting to from the ocean.

The **Whooper Swan** continued to be seen at Lower Klamath NWR (mob). Although there is no doubt that this is indeed a Whooper Swan, there can be no certainty as to its origin and whether it is a naturally-occurring bird. In the instance of species such as this which are raised locally in captivity, every effort is made to check breeders for escaped individuals, but this is obviously not foolproof. Those who keep and determine the records look for a "pattern of occurrence" — evidence that these birds have been seen and accepted at places between here and the Arctic

**There is no issue of importance to the environmental community that is not affected by the increasing number of humans on the planet. Unless we can limit population growth, we cannot achieve ecological stability.**

Peter A. A. Berle,  
*National Audubon Society*

where they might naturally occur in the course of an off-course migration. All the records from the east coast and the mid-west have been turned down because of questionable origin. There are presently two accepted records in California that are being re-reviewed. Up to three Trumpeter Swans were reported from Tule Lake and Lower Klamath at the beginning of the month (DR, MSo, DWh, BY, MDC).

Once more, Eurasian Wigeon seem to be around in record numbers — at Gray Lodge at New Years, there were 10 to 12 in a single pond, leading one to wonder what all the fuss is about. The SF Tufted Duck reappeared for the Christmas Count (mob); another male, perhaps the same SF bird, was seen at Rodeo Lagoon (TG); and two were at the SF Bay NWR through the 21st (AlH, GjH). The **Steller's Eider** at Bodega Bay was still around at the end of the year (mob).

A Mountain Plover was a surprise at Abbott's Lagoon on the 16th (fide DWm). Lemoore, near Fresno, sported thirty Lesser Yellowlegs, a Stilt Sandpiper, up to five Ruffs and a Wilson's Phalarope in the course of the month (KH, RH fide DGY, PJM). A Red-necked Phalarope was unexpected along the American River on the 7th (MJL). Glaucous Gulls were reported from Sunnyvale to the Davis Dump to Bodega Bay.

Short-eared Owls, while not rare, seem to be declining locally, probably because of increased development although pesticide use may be a con-

tributing factor; individuals were reported from Santa Cruz on the 14th (fide CKf) and Hayward Shoreline on the 21st (SM). Also noteworthy were ten Long-eared Owls in Tennessee Valley on the Southern Marin Count on the 28th (fide DSi).

There were two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in the environs of Pt. Reyes Station from early- to mid-month (DDeS, GFi, fide DWm) and another two in Golden Gate Park from the 24th to the 29th (DPM, SMO, JE); plus Red-naped Sapsuckers at Briones (JA) and Novato (THK).

Up to five Rufous/*Selasphorus* Hummingbirds were buzzing around the UC Botanical Garden from the 10th to the 15th (ToC, mob). They were found primarily because a former Boston birder, newly moved to California, was indulging a passion for birds in general and the Botanical Garden in particular on the 5th and glimpsed an *Empidonax* flycatcher, big-headed and short-tailed with a distinctive "whit" call that ruled out Hammond's Flycatcher which makes an occasional winter appearance here. **Least Flycatcher** is a regular thing on the east coast and no big deal, but it had never been found in Alameda County before. The bird was finally re-found and the identification confirmed on the 12th after which there was a parade of watchers to Strawberry Canyon (MV, DFW, mob). A Hammond's Flycatcher at Pt. Reyes (RS, BK) and a Pacific-slope Flycatcher in SF (DPM) round out the local *Empidonax* finds. There were not one but two Eastern Phoebes around in Marin County (RS, GFi, mob), a Vermilion Flycatcher in Tulare County (PJM) and Tropical Kingbirds in Monterey and Humboldt Counties (PJM, MiF, JCS).

An American Dipper was as unexpected at Pescadero (DJK fide RSTh) as it was in Mountainview Cemetery in Oakland (RL). Townsend's Solitaires

**The population problem concerns us, but it will concern our children and grandchildren even more. How we respond to the population threat may do more to shape the world in which they live than anything else we do.**

Lester Brown  
Worldwatch Institute

were found from Mt. Tam (fide DSi) to Mt. Diablo (SGI, KGH) to San Benito Mt. (DSi); and a Swainson's Thrush at Palomarin on the 11th was a real shock (LeE). **White Wagtail** has occurred locally a couple of times in the last few years, but that makes the individual at Coyote Creek from the 15th to the 18th no less of a treat (ER fide SBT, MDa).

There was the customary spate of mid-winter warblers: three Nashvilles along the San Mateo coast (RSTh, AME) and two at Stinson Beach (RS); Tennessee and Chestnut-sided in Humboldt (JCS); Black-throated Gray and Blackburnian in Santa Cruz (fide CKf, DLSu); a total of eleven Palm and ten Black-and-white Warblers; American Redstart in El Granada (RSTh) and MacGillivray's Warbler at Alviso (fide MiF). The two Summer Tanagers continued to be seen at Lake Merced (mob) along with another at Stern Grove (JsC) and a Western Tanager in the Haight (JsC). A Woodside feeder continued to boast a Rose-breasted Grosbeak (KG, JMS, MiF).

The good sparrows were around too: American Tree at Pigeon Pt. (mob); Chipping and Vesper in Contra Costa (fide RJR); Clay-colored at Pt. Reyes Station (RS) and Pigeon Pt. (AWa); Sharp-tailed at Palo Alto and SF Bay NWR (mob, RJR); Harris' in Union City (RJR, EHa); and numbers of Swamp and White-throated. One McCown's and up to five Lapland Longspurs on the 1st were the first Plumas County records of both (DS, MMC). There was a **Brambling** at Ferndale in Humboldt County on the 29th and 30th (JCS, GSL) and two Cassin's Finches in Fairfax on the 26th (HK).

## OBSERVERS:

John Ascher, Stephen F. Bailey, Bruce Barrett, Chris Benesch, Josiah Clark, Tom Condit, Mark D. Cudney,

Maryann Danielson, Dave DeSante, Joe Eaton, Alan M. Eisner, Lee Elias, Mike Feighner, George Finger, Tony Gill, Kevin Gilmartin, Steve Glover, Keith Hansen, Rob Hansen, Ed Hase, Gjon Hazard, Kevin G. Hintsa, Alice Hoch, Joan M. Humphrey, Harrison Karr, Dan J. Keller, Clay Kempf, Theodore H. Koundakjian, George S. Lester, Leslie Lieurance, Ron Lindeman, Michael J. Lippsmeyer, Steve Margolin, Mac McCormick, Peter J. Metropulos, Joe Morlan, Scott Morrical, John E. Parmeter, Don Roberson, Mike M. Rogers, Edward Rooks, Barry Sauppe, David Shuford, Dianne Sierra, Dan Singer, Jean-Marie Spoelman, Mark Sokal, Rich Stallcup, John C. Sterling, David L. Suddjian, Scott B. Terrill, Ronald S. Thorn, Martha Vaughan, Adrian Wander, David Wharton, David Wimpfheimer, Dennis F. Wolff, David G. Yee, Bob Yutzy.

—ANN DEWART

## MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC TRIP

The Golden Gate Audubon Society will sponsor a boat trip on **Sunday, March 8** to view seabirds and marine mammals. We plan a 7:30 a.m. departure from Monterey Harbor. Past trips have produced sightings of albatross, shearwaters, jaegers, alcids, dolphins, whales and other species not usually seen from the land.

Reservations may be made by sending \$29 per person to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Ave., Suite G, Berkeley, California 94702. Make checks payable to GGAS and enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. Details on when and where to meet will be mailed with confirmation notices.

For more information call GGAS office at 843-2222.

## CONSERVATION NOTES

### MONO LAKE UPDATE

(The following is excerpted from a letter from the Mono Lake Committee. Because it is a concise summary of the current status it is reprinted even though many readers may have seen it.)

... The Committee is still the underdog in a dramatically uneven fight against the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP). Our "small but tenacious" membership "may even win" (the quotes are from a *Los Angeles Times* news story) — but we haven't won yet.

The hard truth is, without continued support we could lose in the next two years all that we have gained for Mono Lake in the past decade. Why? Because the legal battle over DWP's diversion from Mono Lake is far from finished.

We've won temporary court orders protecting Mono Lake. Now the Committee must go before a state agency—the State Water Resources Control Board—to fight for the water that will remain in Mono Lake permanently.

As part of the hearing process, the Water Board is preparing an Environmental Impact Report to assess the impact of DWP's 50 years of diversions on Mono Lake. Yet the Board refuses to use 1941—the year in which the diversions started—as the logical, reasonable beginning point for the analysis. Instead, the Board opted to use 1989 as the base year—even though Mono Lake had dropped more than 40 vertical feet below its pre-diversion water level by this time!

To counter the Board's decision, the Committee has been forced to hire emergency research staff to thoroughly document the historic 1941 conditions

in the Mono Basin. With the preliminary release of crucial sections of the Board's draft EIR only months away, our Lee Vining staff is working overtime to prepare Mono Lake's defense.

The preferable solution is to resolve the Mono Lake problem immediately without going through additional administrative and legal hearings. But DWP refuses to discuss settlement. DWP has yet to respond to our six point plan for protection of Mono Lake. DWP continues to spurn the \$60 million in state funds that could be used to develop environmentally sound water supplies to replace the Mono Basin diversions. The Committee has no choice if we are to protect Mono Lake. We must prepare for the State Water Board's hearings with the same dedication and hard work which earned the Committee its recent courtroom victories. Costs are also increasing and support continues to be needed.

## YOSEMITE AGAIN

Just when you think something is under control, whamo—it is not. The present concessionaire for Yosemite National park, the Curry Company, is wheeling and dealing again to undermine the Management Plan for Yosemite. The old Curry management remains in place even though there has been a sale of the Curry Company to The National Parks Foundation, a non-profit organization.

The plan for the park has been delayed, and modifications suggested undermine the intent to preserve the Park. The latest suggestion is to expand the fast-food activities in the valley.

The Park Service is suspected of operating a shell game which will allow the management of the old concessionaire to emerge as the successful bidders when the contract comes up in 1993.

**Global population growth is an urgent priority, and it must be addressed with substantial family planning assistance.**

Denis Hayes,  
*Earth Day*

## STONE LAKES NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The proposed Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, south of the Sacramento city limits, contains wetland, riparian, vernal pool, grassland and oak woodland habitats. These habitats support diverse and abundant populations of plant and animal species but are threatened by agricultural and housing development in one of the fastest growing regions of the country. Many endangered and threatened species use the area, along with heavy concentrations of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. Unfortunately, opposition from development interests has already repeatedly delayed environmental reviews for this proposed refuge, and continues to jeopardize the refuge's establishment.

Please write to your Representative in Congress and to the two US Senators and to Manuel Lujan, Jr., Secretary of the Interior. US Dept. of the Interior, Washington DC 20240. Ask for full support for the prompt completion of the environmental reviews and speedy establishment of this refuge for all the usual reasons.

## YOLO BYPASS WILDLIFE AREA

The State of California Wildlife Conservation Board has completed acquisition from PG&E Properties of 3,100 acres east of Davis and south of I-80. Known commonly as the Putah Sinks, it was purchased for \$4.65 million. It is a vital link in the Pacific flyway and a support to thousands of migratory waterfowl.

Local activists, including members of the Putah Creek Council, Yolo Audubon, and Sierra Club, conceived the concept for restoration of the Putah Creek Sinks, according to Robin Kulalow of the Yolo Basin Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about wetlands and other native Central Valley Wildlife habitats. The Yolo

County Board of Supervisors and the City of Davis have been consistent supporters of the plan. US Representative Fazio procured Army Corps of Engineers funding, and the Corps will be in charge of planning and construction of the wild life area.

The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited and the California Waterfowl Association, all members of the Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture, have participated from the beginning. "I am particularly proud of the process by which this wildlife area has come to fruition, through a long series of public meetings attended by scores of people," Kulakow said. "This is genuinely a community effort."

For information call Robin Kulakow at (916) 756-7248.

## ENCOURAGING VOLUNTEERISM?

While some in Washington emphasize the strengths and contributions of voluntary organizations and salute the great resource volunteers offer to America—others quietly, and without warning in the recent postal increase package gave non-profit mailers a 23.2% increase. We at GGAS learned of the increase only when the cost of the December mailing of *The GULL* jumped from \$590 to \$727.

Imagine the response of the direct-mail advertising interests to such an increase. Right! Now write your Senators and Congressman and let them know how you feel.

**Achieving and maintaining a sustainable relationship between human populations and the natural resource base of the earth is the single most critical long-term issue facing the peoples of the world and this issue will be increasingly the focus of international affairs for the foreseeable future.**

Russell E. Train,  
*World Wildlife Fund*

## BACK YARD BIRDER

Acorn Woodpeckers are most engaging birds with their clownish markings, wide-eyed expressions, white rumps and attractive white wing patches contrasted against shiny, jet-black wing feathers. With characteristic undulating flight they zoom toward an oak tree top and seem to drop silently onto a branch. They remain inconspicuous as they soak up the thin winter sun until they gain the energy to creep along bare branches searching for juicy bugs. If, by chance, another Acorn Woodpecker is occupying the same tree or pole there will be mild excitement as they greet one another with bowing, wing-fluttering and a lively interchange of harsh calls. Occasionally one bird will dart out to catch a flying insect, performing a mid-air twirl that a member of the flycatcher species would envy. Acorn "woodies" are gregarious birds found in family groups of up to 16. The young of the previous season remain to help excavate the new nest cavity and to help rear the new brood. Their breeding success is dependent upon the acorn crop since in the winter acorns supplement their regular diet of insects, tree sap, nuts, fruit and corn. Because they do not migrate, the fall crop of acorns are stored for the winter in a central place. Up to 50,000 may be kept in a single snag, tree or power pole. The clan vigorously defends this granary against raiders. The acorns are so tightly hammered into their holes that their removal is difficult for a would-be robber—a Lewis' Woodpecker, titmouse, nuthatch, jay or even a squirrel.

Jays and nutcrackers tend to store their nuts, seeds, acorns, etc. under loose litter or in the soil, or sometimes tucked into a niche in a tree. Since the birds don't remember the location of every single seed, the trees benefit by the birds' "planting" some of the seeds. It has been noted that Pinyon Jays and Clark's Nutcrackers are co-evolving with the pinyon and other pine trees. Another side bonus is that other birds find the caches and are helped through food shortages.

A few other birds are known to store or hoard food but not to the extent of Acorn Woodpeckers; e.g., shrikes will hang their prey on a fence to dry and will feed on it for a few days. Tits and nuthatches love to hide tidbits beneath the bark of trees but it's not known how successfully they retrieve these foods. Recently it was discovered that in cold climates owls store insects and mammals which subsequently freeze. Boreal, Saw-whet and Great Horned Owls in particular have been observed thawing out their food by literally incubating these frozen morsels just as they would brood their eggs!

We were delighted on Christmas Count Day to find Acorn Woodpeckers as well as Western Bluebirds in a grove of oak trees despite the proximity of jillions of Starlings. It seems that there are enough potential nesting sites for all, as they compete for a place to carve out a cavity in a tree, snag or power pole. I hope this trend continues as I find much pleasure in watching the lively antics of the Acorn "clowns."

—MEG PAULETICH

**There will not be an environment left to worry about unless we get the population crisis under control.**

John H. Adams,  
*Natural Resources Defense Council*



## GREENS NEED BOOKS

The local Sierra Club chapter's USSR (sic) Environmental Issues Task Force is sponsoring a book drive to assist environmentalists in establishing libraries in St. Petersburg, Yeroslavl, Kiev and Riga. The need for environmental periodicals and books was expressed by participants at the NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) environmental conference held in Moscow last March. Helen Burke, chairman of the Task Force, represented the Sierra Club at the conference and made an agreement to assist environmental NGO's with building their libraries. In exchange, the newsletters and press-clippings on local and regional issues will be sent from Russia, Ukraine, and Latvia to the Sierra Club.

Preferably current (last 10 years) general books on ecology and the environment, periodicals published by environmental organizations, technical books, i.e., Standard Methods for Water Testing, waste-water treatment, etc., technical/professional journals related to environmental issues: water, air, hazardous wastes, etc. Environmental education materials are also needed: elementary, high school and college books, teacher's materials, as well as children's environmental books and magazines.

To participate, bring books or periodicals to the GGAS office, 2530 San Pablo, Berkeley, or telephone Marcia Nute, (415) 457-9241.

## FREMONT ADULT SCHOOL FIELD CLASSES

Saturday, Feb. 15 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. is a field birding trip with Alice Hoch. She will lead a group to observe birds along the shores of Alameda and Oakland. It is for both experienced birders and beginners. We expect to see

grebes, egrets, ducks, shorebirds, terns, gulls and other birds.

Register by mail (\$20 fee) before Feb. 10, to Fremont Adult School, 4700 Calaveras Ave., Fremont, CA 94538. Include an addressed, stamped envelope, and your phone number. To meet at the site phone the teacher at 657-0475; others meet at 9 a.m. at the flagpole. In case of rain call the teacher. Bring snacks, lunch, beverage and binoculars. If possible bring field guides and spotting scopes. Students are responsible for transportation, but car pools can be arranged.



In California today there are 283 plant and animal species officially listed as "rare," "threatened" or "endangered." Hundreds more are candidates for listing.

The myriad pressures of modern-day California are pushing more of our native plant and animal species toward extinction. Tragically, if something isn't done soon to ease these destructive pressures, many species will disappear.

"Line 50" on the State Tax Form gives us a chance to help turn things around for California's endangered plants and animals. Every taxpayer who fills in "Line 50" is contributing to a unique Statewide program that provides help to troubled wildlife species. Please fill in "Line 50" and give wildlife a fighting chance for survival.

**Overpopulation of the earth is a danger to the planet's life-support system and to the people themselves.**

David Brower  
*Earth Island Institute*

## NEWS FROM OUR RANCH

Audubon Canyon Ranch (415) 868-9244  
Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, CA 94970  
Wildlife Sanctuaries & Centers for Nature  
Education under joint sponsorship of Golden Gate,  
Madrone, Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies  
Gary Holloway, President.

**BE PART OF ACR'S ACTIVE FAMILY.  
VOLUNTEER TO HOST AT THE RANCH  
OR JOIN A FIELD STUDY.**

### PREPARE FOR SPRING — HOSTING OPPORTUNITIES AT THE RANCH

Ok, it's still winter, but if you pay attention, you will see the returning swallows and hummingbirds by the middle of the month. Walk near the coast and you're sure to find that first spring wildflower. Stop by your favorite marsh and find the first insect swarms. You can be sure the Great Blue Herons will be checking out the heronry for this year's perfect nest site. And before you know it the Ranch will begin its 1992 public season.

So here is your chance to be part of the spring ritual at ACR's Bolinas Lagoon Preserve. Plan to help others experience spring by hosting at the Ranch. We always need hosts on weekends and holidays. Of course you can host during the month when your chapter will provide hosts. Watch next month's newsletter for information about that. But if you prefer to host at a specific time please call Edris at (415) 868-9244 so we can make arrangements to provide you with an opportunity to spend the day of your choice volunteering at the Ranch. This year's public season will begin on March 14 and end on July 19.

### HARBOR SEAL DISTURBANCE STUDY

Volunteer observers are needed to assist with a seal disturbance study being conducted in the Tomales

Bay/Tom's Point Area. A commitment of one day per week (about 3 to 4 hours per observation) during the April and May Harbor Seal pupping season is desirable. Observation times vary according to low tides. Please contact either Mary Ellen King (707) 537-1546 or John Kelly at (415) 663-8203.

### HERON/EGRET PROJECT

Once again John Kelly is organizing this north bay Ardeid study. Now in it's third year, the heronry survey covers Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Solano and Contra Costa Counties. Volunteers should plan to participate in a training session and to visit an assigned colony several times, particularly in late spring. If you are interested, it is important to notify John early so he can cover all the known heronries in those counties. Training is also an important factor and must be carried out prior to field work. So call John at (415) 663-8203 for more information or to volunteer. If you know of a heronry in your area please drop John a note describing it. Include the exact location, the species of heron or egret, and the types of vegetation used for nesting.

### STAFF CHANGES

The ACR Board of Directors vote to reorganize staff positions for the Ranch. Skip Schwartz, long time Ranch Manager assumes the role of Executive Director. Nancy Angelesco assumes the role of Administrative Manager and Cindy Massaro will become our new Administrative Assistant. We are very grateful to Nicki Spillane and the members of the Personnel Committee she heads for bringing about these much needed changes. They will help allow ACR to change the employee responsibilities to meet the changing demands on our organization during the coming decade.

## SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT

Our Board of Directors didn't stop with staff changes. After what seemed months of deliberation the decision was made to declare ACR a smoke free environment. Our trails and backcountry areas have always been smoke free, but now we feel it is appropriate to extend that protection to our buildings, reception areas and parking areas. Fire danger and ongoing litter problems were primary among the reasons for this change in policy. The Board also felt a smoke free policy would add to the health and enjoyment of our visitors, the vast majority of whom do not smoke.

## BEQUEST

The ACR Board wishes to acknowledge a substantial gift from the estate of Marion Chaquette to the ACR Permanent Endowment Fund. Marion's gift is one which will provide continued support for the education and preservation programs of our sanctuaries. Her name will be inscribed in the grove of honor at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve in lasting memory of her and her love for Audubon Canyon Ranch.

— DAN MURPHY

## CHAPTER REPRESENTATION ON THE AUDUBON CANYON RANCH BOARD

The sponsoring Audubon chapters are entitled to four representatives on the Board of Directors of our Ranch. The chapter president, Bruce Walker, serves, ex officio, and three others are selected from GGAS leaders. Steven Margolin has been named to replace Bruce Howard, long time board member who continues to serve on the board in another capacity. Dan Murphy and Nikki Spillane are continuing as members.

## NOMINATION OF OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

A nominating committee will be named shortly to consider nominees for GGAS board and officers. Suggestions for either committee members or prospective candidates are solicited. Call or write Bruce Walker or the GGAS office.

## THE AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

Last month as an insert we brought you issue No. 2 of the first volume of *The GULL* as a way of introducing a backward look in honor of the 75th anniversary of GGAS. It was selected, rather than the first issue, because its contents were of more interest. It was not selected to emphasize the message of Alan Hopkins concerning feral cats and California Quail; it was of significance that the efforts of AAP and the Cooper Ornithological Club did not achieve the licensing of cats hoped for.

And, or course, the Audubon Association of the Pacific was the name of the organization founded Jan. 25, 1917 which eventually became the Golden Gate Audubon Society. The only untoward result of publishing this facsimile did not develop into a problem because the member thought to call Barbara Rivines at the office before trying to attend a meeting announced for 1919.

On the following pages you will find an account of a Farallones Trip that appeared in *The GULL* for September 1922. It is of interest from several points of view, the courtly style of an older generation, not the least. The author, Augustus Sayre Kibbe, was the third president of the group.

## THE 1922 TRIP TO THE FARALLONES

Through the kindly co-operation of Capt. H. W. Rhodes, Superintendent of Lighthouses, Eighteenth District, the Association has once more been permitted to visit this fascinating locality. Those of us who were fortunate enough to participate, sympathize most sincerely with those whose absence or business engagements prevented them from attending what can best be described as a classical event in the history of a bird-loving organization.

Promptly at seven o'clock, Friday morning, August eighteenth, the party assembled at Pier 15, San Francisco, boarded the Lighthouse Tender *Madrono* and was forthwith made to feel at home by Capt. Warriner and everyone of the other officers and crew.

The roster included Mesdemoiselles Ames, Bally, Helen Burroughs, Olive Burroughs, Fritts, Griffin, King, Pierce, Schroder and Margaret Wythe; Mesdames Kibbe, Reygadas, E. D. Roe and Thomas; Past Honorary Presidents Dr. B. W. Evermann and H. S. Swarth; Messrs. Joseph Dixon, Kibbe, More, Rapp, Smith, Tracy I. Storer and Thomas. Twenty three in all.

The sun shone brightly as we passed out through the Gate, meeting the Pacific Mall liner President Wilson on her way in. Here and there a bird was encountered; a murre or two, some phalaropes, pelicans; now and again a cormorant would overtake and pass us, swiftly winging his flight to the common destination. We were escorted most of the time by western gulls who would take turns bossing the job from the trucks. A whistling buoy rode with us on the main deck, forward, but none could hear him. A school of large porpoises, vastly excited, came hurtling athwart our course from the north, then

wheeled and traveled with us for a time. Now the sun was obscured by a light fog which prevailed almost to the islands.

At the lightship we loitered an hour while delivering water and other supplies. A lone Pacific fulmar was drifting about, sampling what the gods provided with the air of a *gourmet*. A pilot schooner tacked back and forth on its endless quest. The rest of the world seemed very far away.

Resuming our course soon after ten o'clock, the passing show abated somewhat, and the wind became quite brisk. Some betook themselves to the after cabin to see whether it felt different down there. One to whom fear was stranger, lost his color and tried to see whether it had fallen overboard. Another disposed himself along the gunwale and endeavored to remember why he had come aboard. Not long after eleven, the Farallon light, 350 feet above the sea, was descried and at noon we were anchored in Fisherman's Bay.

The landing was effected smoothly, the ladies being dropped into the small boat in a chair by a hand tackle, and when shore was reached, all one had to do was to keep his feet out of trouble and step off the boat at the top of its rise.

The party then scattered somewhat and for four glorious hours scoured the island, trying in that time to accomplish what would require a week, and a busy one at that. Dr. Evermann and Mr. Swarth sought relics of the fur seals which once thrived on the islands. Two boxes of bones from an excavation were the fruits of their efforts and these will be submitted to a careful examination and identification. Mr. Storer and others endeavored to unearth specimens of the salamanders known locally as night lizards, but, instead, brought forth a baby Cassin auklet from one of the innumerable burrows, to which it was restored after having its picture taken.

Others witnessed the bringing in of two whales by a little steam whaler, which seemed to be dominated by its enormous prey, lashed alongside. The rabbits were very numerous and much more in evidence than in 1917.

The rock wrens were strikingly abundant and apparently more numerous than in 1917. As then, no live Baird cormorants nor petrels were observed, but Miss Pierce found an ashy petrel, recently dead, and thus afforded us an opportunity of becoming acquainted with this pretty little bird. The Cassin auklets were seen in numbers in the water near the landing. The puffins and guillemots flew hither and yon as usual. The Brandt cormorant colonies were well populated and there was a measure of Farallon cormorants. Several black turnstones were found along the notherly shore and one ruddy turnstone was observed by Mr. Swarth, who also reported a western savannah sparrow. Several wandering tattlers were seen and the English sparrows are holding forth around the dwellings.

The serious phase of our visit lies in the relations between the western gulls and the murre. It goes without saying that no census could be attempted, and even had this been possible, the proper time had passed, but those who had visited the islands in 1917 have brought away a very definite conception that the murre are distinctly fewer in proportion and the western gulls more numerous, relatively, than on the occasion of our previous visit. This is a matter which deserves prompt and serious investigation and consideration. The systematic preying of the western gulls upon the eggs and young of the murre and cormorants is notorious. For some reason, the cormorants seem better able to hold their own. Time will be required to establish the facts, and before it is too late, the propriety and feasibility of protecting and preserving the murre should be determined and appropriate action taken. The

gulls are fully able to take care of themselves, at the expense of these other unobtrusive species. Are we in danger of losing the murre? If so, can we afford to lose them? If they are diminishing, and we wish to preserve them, how can this best be accomplished?

During our rambling on the island, the Madrono has made a trip to the north-westerly end of the group and has planted the buoy off Noon-day Rock, and has raised and brought back its predecessor and shortly after four o'clock her whistle is heard. Reluctantly we heed the summons, return to the landing, scramble down and fall into the boat, call the roll, scramble up the accommodation ladder, and wave good-bye. Even the anchor has caught our infection and it hates to let go of the island, but the Captain and the capstan overcome its recalcitrance and we are homeward bound.

After leaving the island, we encountered a considerable flock of shearwaters, flying westward at some distance. Arguing from the amount of white exhibited by these birds, Mr. Swarth concluded that there was among them a large proportion of the black-vented species.

The steamer again traversed the fog belt, finding it somewhat heavier than in the morning. The return trip was broken only by a brief halt at the lightship to take aboard some pilots and service men. Venus, Jupiter and Mars blink benignly upon us from astern. Alcatraz beckons us on, between Bonita and Mile-rock, between Lime Point and Fort Scott. We circle around the red beacon on Meiggs Wharf and make our pier about eight o'clock, a little wiser and very much happier for the experiences of the day, and with everyone grateful to the Department of Commerce and to Superintendent Rhodes and to Captain Warriner for their several contributions to the successful outcome of our second visit to the rocky outpost which marks our famous Bay and guides our commerce safely into it.

— A.S. KIBBE

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## ACT FOR WILDLIFE IN '92

**JUNE 13 - 18, 1992**

Audubon is planning its first ever national convention in Washington, D.C., in June 1992. Entitled "Act for Wildlife in '92: Endangered Species Need You!," this convention is scheduled to enable Audubon members to join forces at a critical time for wildlife in the nation's capital. Not only is it an election year, but 1992 will be one of the biggest ever for environmental legislation affecting wildlife and wildlife habitat. The Endangered Species Act is up for reauthorization in 1992, and next June will be a critical time for decision making on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge legislation, Clean Water Act, and the Ancient Forest bill.

At least 1,000 Auduboners are expected to come to Washington, D.C. next June to learn about the threats to wildlife and the Endangered Species Act and to make their views known on this and other environmental bills before Congress. "Act for Wildlife in '92" will open Saturday, June 13 at American University. It will include three days of workshops on issues, lobbying

and organizing skills, a day on Capitol Hill topped off with a Congressional reception, both day-long and multi-day field trips to outstanding natural areas in the Mid-Atlantic region including the Chesapeake Bay, Canaan Valley (a unique subalpine ecosystem tucked in the mountains of West Virginia), historic Harpers Ferry, the C&O canal, and birding in little-known, local wetland areas--not to mention the many museums, cultural and historic sights of Washington, D.C.

 A brochure giving details on program, registration, lodging and field trips will be available during January 1992.





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Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

**The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,  
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.**

**The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.**